TRUMP UNDER FIRE
World leaders criticize U.S. decision to withhold funding for WHO. A3

SIGNATURE MOMENT
Stimulus checks will have President Trump's signature on them. A3

BIDEN SUPPORTERS
Warren, Ocasio-Cortez endorse former Obama vice president. A5

PARTLY SUNNY 5/6
Breezy and cool; a high of 50. A2

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CORONAVIRUS IN CONNECTICUT

Public urged to wear masks

COVID-19 deaths reach 868 in Connecticut as hospital admissions grow; more than 50,000 people in state have now been tested for coronavirus

By Rebecca Lurye and Dan Brechlin

As Connecticut's coronavirus pandemic death toll reached 868 and hospital admissions increased on Wednesday, Gov. Ned Lamont said residents must wear face coverings in public when social distancing isn't possible.

Lamont, who wore a cloth mask around his neck at his afternoon press briefing Wednesday, said "it's the rule" that people wear face coverings whenever they cannot keep six feet of distance from others in public, such as in grocery stores or crowded parks. The governor said he would probably issue an executive order on masks within days, as New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo did earlier Wednesday, quickly followed by a similar order from New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker.

"I am strongly saying that this is what you've got to do," he said. "I think this is the way we can stop this virus dead in the tracks and get this state moving again."

Lamont said there were 197 new COVID-associated deaths reported Wednesday, a figure the governor described as a "catch-up

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The day's events

- Connecticut reported 197 new COVID-associated deaths Wednesday, bringing the total to 868.
- Total number of deaths in the United States reaches 28,000, and the total cases tally is more than 644,000.
- New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said residents will be required to wear face coverings when they are out in public.
- Federal health officials are under increasing pressure to start publicly tracking coronavirus infections and deaths in nursing homes amid criticism they have not been transparent about the scope of outbreaks across the country. **A4**
- Stocks sink after news about a record drop in retail sales. **A6**
- The state has implemented a software improvement that is expected to speed up the processing of unemployment claims, which have been backlogged about five to six weeks. **B1**

PAWS TO GIVE PRAISE

UConn mascot Jonathan the Husky waves from a moving vehicle during a parade Wednesday to thank health care professionals who are treating COVID-19 patients at UConn Health in Farmington.

BRAD HORRIGAN/HARTFORD COURANT

Relief checks begin arriving

Time will tell if funds are too little, too late to save US economy

By Christopher Rugaber, Paul Wiseman and Kelli Kennedy
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Government relief checks began arriving in Americans' bank accounts as the economic damage to the U.S. from the coronavirus piled up Wednesday and sluggish sales at reopened stores in Europe and China made it clear that business won't necessarily bounce right back when the crisis eases.

With many factories shut down, American industrial output shriveled in March, registering its biggest decline since the U.S. demobilized in 1946 at the end of World War II. Retail sales fell by an unprecedented 8.7%, with April expected to be far worse.

The world's biggest economy began issuing one-time payments this week to tens of millions of people as part of its $2.2 trillion coronavirus relief package, with adults receiving

Turn to ***Economy, Page A4***

CHARLES KRUPA/AP

A man walks past a Macy's in Boston. U.S. retail sales plummeted last month.

Travelers without fans? 'A new normal'

300K

That's the **number of spectators** the Travelers typically draws to Cromwell through its normal week of activities. The tournament has had Travelers as its title sponsor since 2007. It raised roughly **$20 million for local charities** over the past 13 years and it brings in an estimated **$68 million in economic impact** to the state.

Lamont backs plan to proceed with tourney

By Dom Amore

Gov. Ned Lamont said Wednesday he supports the possibility of holding the Travelers Championship golf tournament in late June as scheduled, so long as there are no fans in attendance.

The Travelers Championship, one of the best-attended stops on the PGA Tour and long one of the biggest sporting events in Connecticut, is slated to go on as scheduled, according to a Golf Digest report. The Tour, and most professional sports, have been at a standstill since the outbreak of coronavirus in the U.S. in early March.

"I don't think that's too soon," Lamont said, of the tournament scheduled to be held June 25-28. "We are going to be getting back to normal. It will be a new normal. Playing the Travelers, not in front of a crowd, is a normal, just for this cycle. I like that report, if it turns out to be true. We'll have a chance to, at least on TV, enjoy a sport that shows the best of Connecticut in a safe way. I don't think it's too soon."

Lamont's stay-at-home orders are in place through May 20, and he has indicated that, in conjunction with neighboring states, any easing of restrictions will happen gradually. Lamont is working with governors from other states to decide when businesses can begin reopening as the virus subsides. Although Lamont has said "the

Turn to ***Golf, Page A4***

Frontier, weighed down by debt, files for bankruptcy

By Stephen Singer

Frontier Communications Corp., the Norwalk telecommunications company that bought Connecticut's legacy Southern New England Telephone Co. in 2014 and was weighed down by debt from acquisitions that failed to perform, has filed for bankruptcy.

In a filing Tuesday in federal bankruptcy court in White Plains, N.Y., Frontier said a restructuring support agreement with bondholders represents more than 75% of its $11 billion in outstanding bonds. The restructuring plan is expected to reduce its debt by more than $10 billion.

It also said it has obtained commitments for $460 million in financing and, with cash on hand, it has more than $1.1 billion in liquidity.

Frontier said it expects to continue providing service to customers without interruption.

Shares plunged 27%, closing Wednesday at 28 cents. It had reached a high of $125.70 in 2015.

"We are undertaking a proactive and strategic process with the

Turn to ***Frontier, Page A10***

ACLU lawsuit

The Connecticut attorney general's office asked a judge Wednesday to dismiss a lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut seeking a significant reduction of the state prison and jail population due to the pandemic. During a hearing for oral arguments Wednesday, Assistant Attorney General James Belforti said that releasing inmates is "reckless."
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